



NEWS RELEASE

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Valentine's Day: Choose naturally sweet treats

*By Kay Blakley,
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FORT LEE, Va. – It's time for sweet treats, what with Valentine's Day just around the corner. However, just "how sweet it is" is something moms who are raising healthy children want to pay close attention to. Children form food preferences very early in life, and a steady diet of high-sugar treats as a child can set the stage for lots of blubbery "love handles" later in life.

Most of the time, choose naturally sweet treats instead. Apple slices with a little peanut butter, pear slices with a cube of natural cheese, strawberries with yogurt, orange segments, kiwi slices, cubed melon, mini bunches of grapes (cut them in half, if the child's a toddler) raisins or other dried fruit, and a small serving of 100-percent juice, either alone or mixed with mineral water for a fizzy fun treat are all healthy options. The natural sweetness of fruit comes packaged by Mother Nature with lots of healthy fiber and body-building vitamins and minerals.

When nothing but a cookie will do, go for graham crackers or oatmeal cookies. Both graham flour and oatmeal are whole grain, you know. But, if neither of these choices is sweet enough for your little one's taste, try fig bars. Their over-the-top sweetness comes mostly from the figs, with very little added sugar.

If your child eats healthy treats most of the time, exceptions can be made for special occasions like Valentine's Day. So, how does a homemade lollipop sound? I know – it's pure sugar! But, lollipops are small – don't let your child eat too many. And, since making them yourself takes a bit more effort than plopping a ready-made bag in your commissary cart, they

maintain their “special treat” status.

When your child is older you can even use lollipop-making as a science lesson about crystal formation. Now, how sweet is that?

Come to Kay’s Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com> and give our featured homemade lollipops recipe a try. All the necessary ingredients are ready and waiting for you at your local commissary.

- DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*